

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

3 July 1985

Pakistani Attitudes Toward Afghanistan [] 25X1

Summary

President Zia is not wavering in his support for the Afghan insurgency and retains broad public backing for his Afghan policy. [] 25X1

[] media criticism has increased in recent weeks. The political opposition also is trying to exploit the issue to revitalize itself and undermine the government. [] 25X1

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Zia's program to restore gradually democratic rule to Pakistan has set the stage for an unprecedented public debate--much of it critical--on Islamabad's Afghan policy. The tone of the debate has been influenced in part by the continued high rate of cross-border air attacks and violations into Pakistani territory, some of which have resulted in Pakistani casualties. The visits by Zia and the Provincial Governor of the North-West Frontier to the village of Swir in the Chitral, the scene of a particularly deadly Afghan attack late last month, illustrate the government's sensitivity to the potential political fallout from the cross-border attacks. [] 25X1

This memorandum was prepared by [] the Pakistan/Afghanistan/Bangladesh Branch, South Asia Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations. Information as of 30 June 1985 was used in its preparation. Questions and comments should be directed to Chief, South Asia Division, at [] 25X1

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Thanks in part to the relaxation of government controls, media criticism of Zia's Afghan policy has increased in recent weeks. Some newspaper editorials have questioned why the government has yet to respond to the Afghan attacks; others have charged that Zia is letting Pakistan be used by the United States as a pawn in its confrontation with the USSR in Afghanistan.

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Pakistani intolerance of the large Afghan refugee presence has led to growing anti-American sentiment because of the belief that the United States is opposed to a political solution that would allow the repatriation of the refugees to Afghanistan. US diplomats in Karachi also note some public disenchantment with the refugee presence because of inflationary pressures and a sharp increase in crime rates.

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Opinion in the National Assembly

The newly elected National Assembly has the potential to become the main forum for views critical of Pakistan's--and US--policy toward Afghanistan, but the contentious debate that opposition politicians had hoped to generate during the recently concluded session of the Assembly did not materialize. The government kept the topic off the agenda and forcefully defended its support of the insurgents in response to questions. Those delegates who spoke out on Afghanistan all expressed concern about the number of cross-border attacks and the deteriorating security situation in the border areas. Zia's critics also accused the government of risking further escalation of the conflict. Other

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members, however, supported the government, and a few even urged the government to respond more forcefully to future Afghan air attacks. Contrary to expectations, the demand for direct talks with Kabul to settle the Afghanistan conflict was not widely voiced in the Assembly. [REDACTED]

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Zia's Views

In our judgment, Zia's Afghanistan policy is based on what he sees as the need to prevent the Soviets from controlling Afghanistan and using it as a base to threaten and destabilize Pakistan. He also knows that Pakistani support to the Afghan insurgents has helped Islamabad secure increased military and financial assistance from the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, and Western Europe. [REDACTED]

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We believe Zia's concern with containing the spread of Soviet power and influence is heightened by Moscow's close relations with New Delhi. US Embassy reporting indicates Zia and senior Pakistani officials fear that India and the USSR are conspiring to weaken and neutralize Pakistan so that its policies do not threaten their interests. [REDACTED]

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Zia believes that the United States and Pakistan share a common interest in opposing Soviet control of Afghanistan. He probably is not concerned that a US-Soviet dialogue on Afghanistan will undermine support for Pakistan and its Afghan policy. [REDACTED]

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We believe public debate will grow, particularly after martial law ends, and complicate Zia's decision making on Afghanistan. Zia is sensitive to charges that his policies serve

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US--not Pakistan's--interests and undermine Pakistan's security by increasing Soviet and Indian hostility. In this regard, Zia views the UN-sponsored indirect talks with Afghanistan at Geneva as a means to show diplomatic flexibility, to deflect domestic criticism of his support of the resistance, and to put political pressure on Moscow. [REDACTED]

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Zia is unlikely to change his policy solely because of growing public disenchantment. Zia's perception of US support and reliability, the level of Soviet military pressure along the border with Afghanistan, the state of relations with India and Pakistan's economic well-being will all be considerations in Zia's calculations. [REDACTED]

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